

News Release



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Update on \$\$\$ For Crystal Cove and El Morro

State Budget Crisis Will Not Impact Funding For Crystal Cove State Park

CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK – California’s continuing budget crisis will not affect the progress, plans or funding for renovating the Historic District at Crystal Cove and converting the El Morro Village Trailer Park to a State Park campground. The funding sources for both have no connection with the current budget crisis. The amounts are secure and to suggest that the funding is in doubt is false.

A total of more than \$25 million has been allocated and remains secure for both projects, with some of it already in use for portions of both projects. In addition, both projects are on schedule, with a General Plan that has been approved and updated through the public hearing process, and State Parks has every intention of proceeding as planned with no interruptions.

“We have had people ask if the State’s current budget crisis will affect either of these projects “, said Mike Tope, Superintendent of the State Parks Orange Coast District. “ I want people to know that these projects are secure and on-track; there is nothing uncertain or under-funded in the current plans. The State may be in the midst of an economic downturn and budget crisis, but the funding sources for these projects is from voter approved bond sources and is not in doubt, will not be affected, and we are moving forward.”

About the Funding

Twice in the past three years, Californians have overwhelmingly passed park bond measures designed to do exactly what is being carried out at the Crystal Cove Historic District and the El Morro Village site. Those bond measures are Proposition 12, the \$2.1 billion dollar initiative passed by more than 60 per cent of voters in March 2000. The other is Proposition 40, the \$2.6 billion bond measure, likewise passed overwhelmingly in March 2002. This is not tax fund money, it is bond money, and the law dictates that it cannot be diverted to fill any needs of the current budget crisis. Californians have

sent a clear message that they want this bond money spent on park facility projects, like the Crystal Cove Historic District renovation and the El Morro Village conversion.

Crystal Cove Historic District Restoration

For the Crystal Cove Historic District project, a total of **\$12.1 million** was appropriated for the first phase of the restoration of the historic cottages and the initial site development. The money includes \$9.2 million from Proposition 40 and \$2.9 million from the California Coastal Commission. The appropriation as stated, is final and secure, and the funding is sufficient to complete the work scheduled under the phasing listed below:

1. **Preliminary Plans Phase** – Completion of the preliminary plans for the First Phase Implementation is expected in June 2003. Included with preliminary plans and studies are specific natural and cultural resource surveys.
2. **Working Drawing Phase** – This phase is currently underway and is scheduled for completion in the fall of this year, 2003. This phase will enable state parks to obtain all the necessary permits, and finalize construction drawings and specifications necessary for construction contracts.
3. **Construction Phase** – This first phase of construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of this year, 2003. It is anticipated that construction will occur in two phases. Site work will begin in the fall for improving roads, paths, staircases, site stabilization, as well as utility development. Cottage rehabilitation is scheduled to begin this winter. This rehabilitation consists of over twenty cottages and includes adaptive uses for overnight accommodations, interpretation and education to include exhibits and panels, a café, and park operations needs. Completion of all First Phase Implementation is scheduled for the fall of 2004. Availability of completed rehabilitated facilities for public use is expected by winter 2004-2005.

El Morro Village Conversion and Environmental Rehabilitation

For the El Morro conversion project, the conversion is on schedule in three distinct phases, with a total of **\$12.9 million** now appropriated or secured as follows:

1. **Preliminary Plan Phase** – This phase is now complete, funded by \$2,118,000, earmarked and established from Proposition 12, the Parks Bond Act of 2000, and included in the Governor's 2000-2001 budget. The work items include a topographic survey, natural and cultural resource investigations, schematic drawings, and CEQA preparation, along with preliminary plans and cost estimates. A large portion of these funds is also earmarked for annexation to the local sewer district and sewer connection fees.
2. **Working Drawing Phase** -- Funding for this phase, \$803,000, has been earmarked and established from Proposition 12, the Park Bonds Act of 2000. These funds were included in the 2002-2003 budget and will enable state parks to obtain all the necessary permits, finalize

construction drawings, specifications and cost estimates and advertise the bid for construction of the project. These tasks are now underway and proceeding on schedule.

3. **Construction Phase** – Funding for this phase, \$10,072,000, has been earmarked from Proposition 12, the Parks Bond Act of 2000. These funds will be appropriated in the 2004-2005 budget and will enable state parks to award the construction contract, complete the construction and open the facility for public occupancy.

Construction Ready to Go In 2005

The above stated phasing for El Morro means that by the time the lease expires for the mobile home residents in December 2004, State Parks will have the planning, funding and contract selection completed and the project will be ready for construction in early 2005. This is a project that is on track and ready to go with all necessary pieces of the public use plan approved, funding secured and moving ahead.

“The plan for affordable housing at El Morro would throw out the plan approved by the public for Crystal Cove State Park and keep private citizens living in a State Park,” added Tope. “Affordable housing is a good thing, but not an appropriate thing for a State Park system designed to provide quality camping and outdoor recreational experiences for all citizens of this state.”

For the public of California, full public use of the historic district and the proposed campground for El Morro are very close, finally within reach. Since 1979, the historic district and the El Morro site have been part of a State Park. The historic district is now moving toward full public use. After more than twenty years, it is time to stay the course on delivering the El Morro site to full public use. With money and plans solidly in place, it is time to finally return this State Park to the citizens of California.

Last Chance for Coastal Campground

Throughout California, there is a huge demand for additional beachfront camping and recreation. Crystal Cove represents the last opportunity anywhere along the coast of Southern California for the addition of a coastal campground.

In addition, there is a sizable economic benefit for local communities. The 85 million annual visitors to State Parks spend more than \$2.6 billion dollars yearly in communities around the State Parks they are visiting. UC Berkeley Economic experts tell State Parks that when those dollars are re-spent, that represents a total economic benefit to California of over \$6 billion dollars yearly, that amount of money fueling an estimated 100,000 jobs across the state.

Campers and historic district overnights will be visiting grocery stores, hardware stores, local restaurants, art galleries, specialty shops, tourist attractions, sporting goods stores, gas stations and much more. That means the overnight visitors to the historic district and the El Morro campground are going to add significantly to the economies of the many communities of the Orange Coast.

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